

**MINUTES
NORTH LEBANON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
September 28, 2023**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the North Lebanon Township Board of Supervisors was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Brensinger at the Union Canal Elementary School Building located at 400 Narrows Drive, Lebanon, PA. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The following Board members and Township staff were present:

Ed Brensinger – Chairman
Gary Heisey – Vice-Chairman
Arden Snook, Sr – Treasurer
Tim Knight – Chief of Police
Lori Books – Township Manager

Also present were Lizzy Pedersen, Recording Secretary, Emily Bixler, *LebTown* reporter, as well as several members of the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The purpose of this meeting is to present the results of the PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) Study for potential police regionalization between North Cornwall Township and North Lebanon Township.

CHIEF OF POLICE – Tim Knight

Chief Knight thanked the members of the public in attendance for their interest in the potential police regionalization between North Cornwall and North Lebanon Township's. Chief Knight presented the study done by DCED, which can be found on the Township's website. At the end of his presentation, he expressed his personal support for regionalization and thanked the integral individuals involved in the completion of the study.

Sgt. Paul Savini – North Cornwall Police Department

Sgt. Savini expressed his personal support as well as the North Cornwall Police Department support for the police regionalization.

Officer Nikolas Gallese – North Lebanon Police Department

Officer Gallese read a letter of support he had written about the potential police regionalization.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mike Webster

Mr. Webster asked if the officers would keep their current positions and pensions if regionalization would take place.

Emily Bixler – Lebtown Reporter – Next Steps

Ms. Bixler asked the Board what the next steps would be moving forward, if approved. Supv. Brensinger stated the next step would be to create a steering committee.

Adam Hain

Mr. Hain stated that if Chief Knight is on board, then he is also in support of regionalizing.

Chief Knight

Chief Knight stated it is difficult to hire new officers and regionalizing would help with that.

Cheri Grumbine

Ms. Grumbine started by thanking the officers for keeping the community safe. She asked how the issue of only one officer on duty at a time would change. Chief Knight explained by having zones it would allow multiple officers on duty for each shift.

She inquired if the enforcement of local Ordinances, such as permitting for junkyards and wild animals, would still be enforced if the regionalization would happen. Chief Knight stated they would continue to enforce the local Ordinances as they have always done.

Ms. Grumbine inquired about what would happen to the contract with West Lebanon Township. Chief Knight stated the agreement with West Lebanon Township would stay the same.

Ms. Grumbine inquired how the shifts would be decided as North Lebanon Township Police Force has 8-hour shifts and North Cornwall Township has 10-hour shifts. Clerical personnel were also a concern, as was the mechanic for both fleets. She asked about North Lebanon Township's assets such as the Township's eight vehicles compared to North Cornwall Township's five vehicles as well as other major assets such as computers, equipment, etc. Chief Knight stated Ms. Grumbine's concerns would need to be worked out; that is what the steering committee would do.

Ms. Grumbine brought up the concern of where the force would reside. She does not believe the North Lebanon Township Building is of sufficient size to hold both North Lebanon and North Cornwall Township's police forces. Chief Knight stated the Board would make that decision.

Dan Boast stated once coverage level reaches 20,000 residents it makes it easier to obtain grants.

Ms. Grumbine suggested putting a referendum on the ballot, so all residents have a say. Supv. Heisey replied he also suggested that at the last meeting and our solicitor informed him that is not an option as there are strict guidelines to get something on the ballot and this does not qualify.

Ms. Grumbine thanked the Board and Chief Knight for their time. She believes it is a great idea to get everyone's opinion on this topic.

Jim Miller

Mr. Miller stated there have been many pros, but he would like to hear a con, if there are any.

Mr. Boast stated the Township would not save money right away, it would take several years before the Township would see any savings.

Emily Bixler

Ms. Bixler inquired about the studies done in the past as to why the Township had never decided to move forward with the previous studies. Supv. Brensinger stated at the time it was not feasible.

Chief Knight

Chief Knight reviewed some similarities between North Lebanon and North Cornwall Township. They are both second class townships, have similar contracts, use the same pension system, and they border each other. All of which would reduce costs overtime.

Susan Briskie

Ms. Briskie asked the Board how long it would take to regionalize if it were approved. Supv. Snook stated it would take about a year.

Ms. Briskie stated this sounds wonderful. She also wondered if this would go on the resident's tax bill. Supv. Heisey explained the process and how our budget and taxes work.

Adam Hain

Mr. Hain thanked the Board for their explanation.

Kori Eder

Ms. Eder asked the Board to please consider investing in this because she believes it would benefit the Township's Police Department.

Michael Burge

Mr. Burge stated that he appreciates the police force and is in favor of the police regionalization between North Cornwall and North Lebanon Township's. He asked the Board if they would consider placing this on a voting referendum. Supv. Heisey stated he had already asked Sol. Leonard and she had said this topic is not allowed to be placed on a voting referendum.

Supv. Snook suggested the Board update the residents at the monthly Board meetings from this point forward to keep the residents informed.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Supv. Heisey: Supv. Heisey said he would like to talk to each of the North Lebanon Township's Officers get their opinion on regionalizing. He stated his concern about seniority. He also stated if the Township would go through with the regionalization and wanted to back out in the future there would be a substantial cost.

Supv. Snook: Supv. Snook stated this meeting was a good opportunity to start discussions on this topic. He believes this is the future of law enforcement and the state is awarding more grants to the organizations that regionalize. Regionalization gives more room for growth and promotion.

Supv. Brensinger: Supv. Brensinger expressed his concerns of cost, the area of coverage, the current equipment and size of building, the railroad tracks affecting the response times, and the best of both contracts driving costs up. He stated there are a good number of current and retired officers who are opposed to regionalizing. Supv. Brensinger believes there will be more Townships added down the line. He stated the study was completed by DCED and not the members of the Township. He wished more residents would have shown up to this meeting.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth M. Pedersen
Recording Secretary